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Cooking

New Orleans Classic Seafood
Kit Wohl
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As the Crescent City gradually reclaims her *red bean and beer belly of the nation* role after kitchen-killer Katrina steamed through, a sense of compassion encourages us to spotlight deserving cookbook projects celebrating the region's culinary traditions. Unfortunately, most Creole and Cajun cookbooks bite off little more than a rehashing of the same old familiar dishes with little variation. Only a few strive to capture the full breadth of multi-cultural New Orleans; a city with Spanish, French, British, African (slave trade), and Caribbean roots.

New Orleans Classic Seafood compiles forty-five signature recipes from the beloved restaurants in New Orleans that embrace this multitude of influences. Of course, these are the restaurants responsible for New Orleans' great culinary reputation in the first place. And while some of them have published books in the past, this project will add fresh content to any collection.

The author of two other New Orleans cookbooks, Kit Wohl made good use of her local connections to entice many of the city's most respected restaurants to participate. Commander's Palace, Galatoire's, Antoine's, Arnaud's, Uglesich's, Melange at the Ritz, and several others spill their respective secrets and Wohl adds a few interesting historical soundbites at the margins. In the end, *Classic Seafood* is equal parts restaurant guide and cookbook with wonderful full-page color photographs. Crab, crayfish, oysters, shrimp, redfish, catfish, etc., all play lead roles in bisques, étouffées, gumbos, jambalayas, and other longtime favorites. Best of all, the recipes don't condescend. Any food lover with sound cooking skills, fresh herbs, distinctive spices, and quality seafood is sure to love the results.

Matt Sutherland